

NORTH DAKOTA STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL
QUARTERLY MEETING

January 20, 2021
8:30-12:30 p.m., Central Time
Virtual Meeting

MEETING MINUTES

Members Present: Jodi Webb, Teresa Larsen, Trevor Vannett, Robyn Throlson, Renee Speidel-Wetzsteon, Gillian Plenty Chief, Terry Peterson, Joseph Hall, Russ Cusack, Jason Sutheimer, Matthew McCleary, Cathy Quintane, Damian Schlenger

Members Absent: Gerry Teevens, Tina Bay, Bruce Murry, Brandy Johnson, Marshall Longie, Shannon Cook

Call to Order: Renee Speidel-Wetzsteon called the meeting to order at 8:45 a.m. A quorum was present.

Action: A motion to accept the agenda was made by Jodi Webb and seconded by Gillian Plenty Chief. Motion carried.

Action: A motion to approve the October 2020 minutes was made by Teresa Larsen and seconded by Russ Cusack. Motion carried.

DVR Regional I Update – Aimee Walter

Counselors have been visiting schools across the region working with potentially eligible and VR eligible individuals. Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) contracts serve six schools, with three of the contracts being new this year. VR has been providing additional technical assistance to them. Average all regions should be at right now for Pre-ETS staff time is 25%. Region I is well over 50%. The region is working hard to maintain partnerships with other agencies i.e., Adult Learning Center, Workforce partners, etc. They are trying to bring in more applications and get referrals. The office is fully staffed.

DVR Region VII Update – Tom Schiwal

Tom gave a brief overview of the staff makeup in his region. COVID-19 has affected this region. March of last year they were approximately 20% further towards their goals compared to the same time the previous year. Due to COVID-19, referrals and placements decreased. Several clients left their place of employment and VR services. Individuals have requested their case be put on hold until they feel it is safe to return to employment. Ended the year Sept 2020, at approximately 14% behind target goals. Currently doing well with the number of intakes. They are at 33% of the goal with 25% of the year passed. Transition services are moving forward well. Counselors have access to all schools, except for Standing Rock where everything is done remotely. Bismarck counselors are meeting with Pre-ETS contract coordinators monthly to review progress, answer questions and field concerns. This has improved the partnership and flow of services. They have begun meeting with the CRP's who provide Customized Employment to assist them with a smoother process to move clients through Discovery.

SILC

Russ Cusack gave a presentation regarding the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC). Items discussed were the Mission, Purpose, Council Committees, and the activities of the four Centers for Independent Living. SILC updates will be added as a standing agenda item.

VR Director Update:

Damian introduced himself and gave information regarding his background. He is busy with legislative tasks and learning about Vocational Rehabilitation.

Legislature Updates

Damian spoke of his testimony and let the Council know he has requested the IL Center funding be put back into the budget.

Tribal Updates

No one present for Tribal Updates.

Committee Breakouts/Reports

Membership/Public Relations Committee – Joe Hall, Chair

The membership committee reviewed potential applicant(s) for the 'Workforce Development Board' and 'Business Representative'. Once the applications are formalized the Membership Committee will make recommendations to the Council. The 'applicant or Former VR Client' representative is pending approval from the Governor's office.

Planning/Evaluation Committee – Teresa Larsen, Chair

Robyn shared information on the Client Satisfaction Survey. Some VR clients are at a high health risk for COVID-19 and have chosen to put their case on hold. A few of the Performance measures have been lower than usual but considering the pandemic overall the measures have been good. VR offices are coordinating an effort to get information out about the VR agency by having flyers placed in local food baskets. Due to the limited data reported on potentially eligible cases, it is difficult to fully capture the impact Pre-ETS has had on transition students nationally. There is some federal momentum to improve data analysis in this area.

Resource Committee – Jason Sutheimer, Chair

Discussion of Workforce Issues-Job Service have staff in the office to support client need and are following the Health Department guidelines. Some discussion around the roll out of the COVID-19 vaccine.

Employment Committee – Bruce Murry, Chair

Jodi Webb on behalf of the committee asked for a representative from APSE speak at the next meeting. The employment tax credit is being introduced again in the legislature. The committee will explore further what HB 1405 entails and how it differs from the last one. Robyn gave an update on Parking fines. A letter went out to cities in July and thus far two cities have sent money in.

Public Comment - There was no one present for public for comment.

Next meeting – April 21, 2021

10:00 a.m.- 4:00 p.m. CST via TEAMS

Action: A motion was made by Joe Hall to adjourn the meeting and seconded by Trevor Vannett. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m.